A

HOMILY

TO THE

Somerſetſhire SEPTUAGINT;

OR

A LETTER of ADVICE

TO THE

SEVENTY PROPRIETORS

OF THE

New Aſſembly-Rooms, in *Bath*:

WITH A

LACONIC ADDRESS

TO THE

GENTRY of the BON TON,

The GAY and GIDDY,

Of this diſſipated Age.

BRISTOL

PRINTED IN THE YEAR MDCCLXXIV.

And ſold by the BOOKSELLERS in *Bath* and *Briſtol*; and by F. NEWBERY, the Corner of St. Paul's Church-Yard, *London*.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

LACONICK BENEVOLENCE;

TO THE

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Of this advanced Age.

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L.L.

THE

PREFACE.

THOUGH the following Pages are calculated for the Meridian of *Bath*, they may ſuit as well ſome others, where the ſame licentious Spirit of Diſſipation, and inordinate Thirſt for Pleaſure prevail; as for Inſtance, *Weymouth*, *Southampton*, *Margate*, *Brighthelmſtone*, &c.

The Author will account himſelf happy, if this ſmall Attempt ſhould become in any Degree inſtrumental to the Removal of that epidemical Evil, which has ſo overſpread this Land; and which, if not reſtrained in Time, will ere long involve us, or our Poſterity in abſolute Ruin; for though the divine Vengeance

is not uſually executed, till after great Patience and Long-Suffering have been previouſly exerciſed towards a ſinful Nation; yet it will certainly overtake the Offenders at laſt; unleſs prevented by a timely Reformation.

May it pleaſe the ALMIGHTY to open and enlighten the Eyes of our Underſtandings; that we may diſcern, and lay hold on thoſe Things which make for our everlaſting Peace, before they are for ever hid from our Eyes!

L----S.

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A

HOMILY, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

AS you are embarked in an Undertaking deſigned for the Amuſement of the Publick; and as Mankind generally ſtand too near themſelves to diſcern their own Failings, eſpecially where Profit or Intereſt are the leading Motives to Action; permit an impartial Spectator to ſuggeſt a few Hints towards the reforming of your preſent plan of Operations; that it may be conducted with more Decorum, and Propriety, than hitherto it ſeems to have been.

I principally refer to the unwarrantable Liberty you have taken of keeping your Rooms open on the Sunday, and by publick Advertiſement inviting in all the Company

around you, to miſpend their ſacred Time: I call it an unwarrantable Liberty, becauſe ſuch Proceedings are forbidden both by divine and human Laws.

But, Cuſtom and Faſhion ſo predominate at preſent, that they are thought ſufficient to bear Men out in any Practice however unreaſonable, and indecent: Our gracious Creator who hath allowed us ſix Days in ſeven, for our wordly Purſuits of Buſineſs or Pleaſure, hath as wiſely reſerved to himſelf the ſeventh Day, as a Day of Reſt from their wonted Labour, both to Man and Beaſt, a Day to be devoted to himſelf; and which accordingly ought to be ſpent in his Service or to his Honour, eſpecially by thoſe, whoſe eaſy Circumſtances and ſuperior Stations have exempted them from the Toil and Labour to which their Inferiors are oblig'd to ſubmit. You, Gentlemen, cannot plead Neceſſity, for this Breach of Chriſtian Duty, in keeping open your publick Rooms on the LORD's Day for the Sale of Tea and Cakes, and being in ſuperior Circumſtances, are I conceive leſs excuſable than your Competitor, Mr. GYDE, the Maſter of the lower Rooms; not that his Conduct is to be vindicated, becauſe the Command to keep holy the Sabbath-Day is of univerſal Obligation on all Chriſtians, high or low, rich or poor.

You

You would doubtleſs think it a little ſurprizing to ſee the mechanical Tribe beneath you, Carpenters, Wheelwrights, Coopers, Maſons, Sawyers, Copperſmiths, &c. each employed on this Day in their reſpective Callings; yet I think they would be found leſs blameworthy than you, their Neceſſities furniſhing a Plea for ſuch Conduct, to which your Superiority in Life can lay no Claim, beſides their having the Sanction of your Example for their Tranſgreſſion, who as their Superiors ought to ſet a better Pattern for their Imitation.

Perhaps ſome of you are in the Station of civil Magiſtrates; if ſo, it is peculiarly incumbent on you *ex officio* to ſuppreſs every Kind of Immorality, that comes under your Inſpection, and this Breach of the fourth Commandment may juſtly be denominated a Species of Immorality, and therefore ſhould be ſuppreſſed by you without Delay, as you would "approve yourſelves the Miniſters of "GOD for Good, a Terror to Evil-Work-"ers, and a Praiſe and Encouragement to "ſuch (only) as do well." And the chief Magiſtrate of your City ought more eſpecially to exert his Authority in this Matter, to ſuppreſs theſe illegal Proceedings, as his Power is more extenſive than that of a private Magiſtrate: Suffer me therefore to ſubjoin a Quotation from the Works of a late

worthy Prelate,* "The Magiſtrate, ſaith "he, is concerned to be watchful over the "Manners of the People, and to be jealous "for the Honour of GOD; in this, conſiſts "the Stability of Nations, for Righteouſneſs "exalteth a Nation, but Sin is the Reproach "of the People. This Caſe deſcends from "the Supreme Head of Juſtice, to every "Officer of the Kingdom, in Proportion to "the Power communicated to him; and "every Magiſtrate who connives at open "Impiety is falſe both to GOD and the "King."

Attend to the expreſs Words of the Commandment, *Exodus* xx. 8—11. "Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy, ſix "Days ſhalt thou labour and do all thy "Work, but the ſeventh Day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy GOD, in it Thou "ſhalt not do any Work, Thou, nor thy "Son, nor thy Daughter, nor thy Man-"Servant, nor thy Maid-Servant," *&c.*

And conſider what a ſolemn Mockery of the ALMIGHTY it is, if at the very Time that You are making your Reſponſe at Church to this Commandment, praying that GOD would incline your Hearts to keep this Law, You are determined preſently to break it, by

* See Dr. *Sherlock*'s Diſcourſes, Vol. IV. Fol. 387.

by purſuing your wonted Pleaſures which You make your Buſineſs, and which however lawful on other Days, are criminal on this: Perhaps You may think that when You return from Church the Duty of the Day is over, and you are at Liberty to follow your Diverſions; but when GOD has challenged a ſeventh Part of our Time as his Due, ought We not cheerfully to conſecrate the Whole of it to his Service and Honour? as We ſcruple not to take the Whole of our common Time on the other ſix Days of the Week in the Purſuit of our ſecular Affairs.

Even the *Jews* in this Reſpect, act with more Juſtice and Propriety "in giving to "GOD the Things that are GOD's." For though their Sabbath ends at Six in the Evening on that Day, yet they conſcientiouſly begin it at Six on the preceding Evening; and ſhall Chriſtians, who boaſt of profeſſing the pureſt Religion in the World, ſuffer themſelves to be out-done by Men of any other Denomination? Attend likewiſe to *Nehemiah*'s Remonſtrance againſt the Prophanation of the Sabbath, *Nehem.* xiii. in which he intimates that the Calamities which had befallen *Jeruſalem* were owing to the Abuſe of the Sabbath, ver. 17, 18. "Then "contended I, with the Nobles of *Judah*, "and ſaid unto them, what evil Thing is "this ye do, and profane the Sabbath-"Day?

" Day? Did not your Fathers thus, and " did not our GOD bring all this Evil upon " us, and upon this City? Yet he bring " more Wrath upon *Iſrael*, by profaning " the Sabbath-Day."

The Subject of this Complaint was their trafficking on the Sabbath, ver. 15. and following " in thoſe Days I ſaw in *Judah* ſome " treading Vine-Preſſes on the Sabbath, and " bringing in Sheaves, and lading Aſſes, as " alſo Wine, Grapes and Figs, and all Man- " ner of Burdens, which they brought into " *Jeruſalem* on the Sabbath-Day; and I " teſtified againſt them in the Day wherein " they ſold Victuals," *&c.* And may we not bear our Teſtimony againſt the Inhabitants of this licentious City, for many of the ſame Evils committed in it? Do not many of them keep their Shops open on this Day and expoſe their Wares to ſale? And that not ſo much for the Supply of the Neceſſaries of Life, as the Luxuries and Superfluities of it? Add to this, the Multitude of Hair-Dreſſers that ſwarm in the Streets, for the gratifying the unneceſſary Demands made by Pride and Vanity on that ſacred Time, which ought to be employed to a better Purpoſe, viz. the aſſembling ourſelves in the Houſe of GOD, " to hear his moſt " holy Word, and to ſet forth his moſt " worthy Praiſe." A Privilege this, too great to be deſpiſed and neglected as it is by the

the Gay and Licentious of the preſent Age; who are ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures inſtead of the living GOD; otherwiſe they would not prefer a faſhionable Appearance in the Court of *Comus* to a decent and ſanctified Attendance on the Houſe of the LORD.

But I fear it is in vain to expect better Behaviour from the Flock, when the Shepherds themſelves are grown ſupine and remiſs, when they deſert the Sheep, and thus encourage them to go aſtray from the Fold, and when inſtead of feeding the Flock themſelves, they leave this Concern to needy Hirelings, and hug themſelves in their Sinecures, which they have taken good Care to line with the warmeſt and fineſt of the Wool. Is it not amazing that Clergymen, Miniſters of the Goſpel of CHRIST, ſhould be Proprietors of, and Sharers in theſe Houſes of Revelry! Can the Prince of Darkneſs deſire a better Proſpect of Succeſs, than when the Miniſters of the Goſpel become Agents for promoting the Intereſt of his Kingdom? When in Defiance of GOD's Law, they indulge to worldly Pleaſures themſelves on his Day, and encourage others to do it, either by joining with the Crowd in the Rooms of public Diverſion, or by Invitation to Muſical Meetings at their own Houſes?

Though *Clericus Paragonicus* may flatter himſelf that theſe harmonic Seaſons are devoted to ſacred Muſic, I think the odds are

greatly

greatly againſt him, that the Devil may prove too cunning for him, by an Introduction of ſome vain ungodly Songs from the heatheniſh Mythology of the Opera-Houſe (eſpecially if Signiora *Squalletta* ſhould be of the Party) and hereby enſnare him in his own Devices, for Satan ſometimes aſſumes the counterfeit Form of an Angel of Light,[b] in order that he may the better deceive Mankind, and corrupt their Minds from the Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel; therefore let *Clericus* remember, that he not only treſpaſſes on ſacred Time himſelf, but that ſuch an Example tends to abate in the Minds of the Laity the Reverence which is due to this holy Day, and encourages them to diſregard it in other Reſpects, as their Intereſt or Inclination may lead them; for Mankind are always ready to catch at every Deviation from Duty which they diſcern in thoſe from whom better Things might be expected, eſpecially thoſe of a ſacred Character, and make it a Sanction for their own Diſobedience.

As nothing tends more to promote the Succeſs and Progreſs of our holy Religion, than the decent, regular, and virtuous Deportment of her Miniſters, and their being themſelves the Patterns and Examples of the holy Doctrines they preach: So nothing has a greater Tendency to depreciate and diſ-

[b] 2 Cor. xi. 14.

diſhonour this beſt and brighteſt Ornament of human Nature, than to ſee thoſe who are entruſted with the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel (and under GOD, with the Salvation of Souls) unfaithful to their Truſt, devoted to Pleaſure, Diſſipation or Indolence, appearing oftener in the Rooms of publick Diverſion, than in the Houſe of GOD; declaiming oftener at the Gaming-Table, than in the Pulpit; diſcovering greater Solicitude for winning filthy Lucre, than Souls for CHRIST! Such may properly be reminded of the Account which the Prophet gives of the Paſtors of *Iſrael*,[c] "His Watchmen are blind, they are ignorant, they "are dumb Dogs, they cannot bark, ſleeping, lying down, given to ſlumber; yea "they are greedy Dogs which never have "enough, they all look to their own Way, "every one for his Gain from his Quarter." ——May the Conduct of all who call themſelves Miniſters of the Goſpel, be ever ſo different from the Character here given of the Shepherds of *Iſrael*, as not to admit of the leaſt Parallel!

But what ſhall I ſay to Parents who are purſuing Pleaſure, *per fas et nefas*, and leading their Children aſtray from the Paths of Innocence and Virtue? Conſider, I pray you, the infinite Conſequences of your preſent Conduct, for as you now train up your own Children, in like Manner, it is moſt

[c] Iſaiah lv. 10, 11.

probable, they will train up theirs, and the Evil will be tranſmitted to future Generations; it is therefore, I ſay, of the greateſt Importance, what Meaſures you now purſue, whether ſuch as are criminal either in their Kind or Degree, and which tend to impair the Health of the Body or Vigour of the Mind, and are beneath the Dignity of rational Creatures: Creatures, formed for an eternal Exiſtence! Or whether ſuch as are noble, manly, worthy of Imitation, becoming rational Beings, as yet in the firſt Stage of their Exiſtence, but advancing towards a World infinitely ſuperior, if not ſunk into Vice and Senſuality by the Way.

As for the Votaries of Pleaſure in general, who are ſo warm in the Purſuit, that they hardly allow themſelves Time to cool, I wiſh, in the Intervals of their reiterated Amuſements, I could engage them for a Moment to conſider their latter End!

The Meaſure of your Days is comparatively but a Span, and the ſly Invader, Death, is ever lurking in Ambuſh around you:— "What is your Life, it is even a Vapour "which appeareth for a little Time and "then vaniſheth away;" [a] but were your Conſtitutions durable as Iron, yet being ſo often heated they muſt needs ſoon decay and crumble into Duſt: Mock the Almighty no longer by your Prevarications; what availeth

[a] James iv. 13.

eth it to [illegible]
tuary, and there repeat theſe Words in the LORD's Prayer, "Thy Will be done on "Earth as it is done in Heaven," if at the ſame Time you intend to tranſgreſs his Will? —The Scripture ſaith, this is the Will of GOD that ye do his Commandments, and we are required to call the Sabbath the holy of the LORD, not finding our own Pleaſures on this Day;[e] conſequently entering into publick Amuſements on this Day is contrary to the Will of GOD, and may be fitly accounted a falling into the Snare of the Devil, according to the Repreſentation of our Saviour in the Parable of the Sower,[f] "Thoſe by the Way Side, ſaith he, are "they that hear, then cometh the Devil and "taketh away the Word out of their Hearts, "leaſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved; "and that which fell among Thorns are "they which when they have heard, go "forth and are choked with the Cares, and "Riches, and Pleaſures of this Life, and "bring no Fruit to Perfection." If you apply this Parable to yourſelves, you may eaſily diſcern whether your Indulgence in publick Diverſions on your Return from the Sanctuary, is not the moſt likely Expedient to eradicate the good Seed ſown in your Hearts, and to encourage Satan to ſcatter his Tares there inſtead of it.

[e] Iſa. lviii. 13. [f] Luke viii. 12—14.

your Conduct after divine Service, there is one during the Continuance of it, which is too conſpicuous to remain unnoticed, I mean that when many of you appear in the Houſe of GOD, inſtead of regarding the Advice of *Solomon*, which is, to "be more "ready to hear than to give the Sacrifice to "Fools, for they conſider not that they do "Evil." You ſeem to reverſe this Precept, by laughing, prating and commenting on the Propriety, or Impropriety of the Dreſs of others around you, little conſidering that ye yourſelves make the moſt ridiculous Figure by acting thus out of Character, in ſhewing a Levity of Mind and Converſation, in the Time of divine Service, which is better ſuited to an Attendance on a Drama or a Puppet-Shew! If you cannot bridle your Tongues and refrain from your vain Converſation when aſſembled in GOD's Houſe to do Homage to your Creator ye had better keep away, then ſet ſuch bad Examples, interrupting the Devotion of others who are better diſpoſed;—attend to the Words of your SAVIOUR to the Scribes and Phariſees, *Matt.* xv. 7, 8. "Ye Hypocrites, well did "*Eſaias* prophecy of you, ſaying, this Peo-"ple draweth nigh unto me with their "Mouth, and honour me with their Lips, "but their Heart is far from me." Let me remind you alſo of St. *Paul*'s Admonition to the *Galatians*, Chap. vi. ver. 7, 8. "Be "not deceived for GOD is not mocked,

"for

" for whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall
" he also reap; he that soweth to the Flesh
" shall of the Flesh reap Corruption," &c.

Ye Daughters of Gaiety and Mirth, who value yourselves so highly on possessing the very Quintessence of the Bon Ton, give me Leave to tell you, that ye are in this Part of your Conduct mistaken, even on your own pretended Principles of Politeness and good Breeding, for where these govern, they will naturally produce a general System of good Manners and decent Deportment in every Place: For Example

Suppose you were assembled amidst a polite Circle of Friends of equal or superior Rank to yourselves, to partake either of the Charms of Eloquence or Musick; if in this Assembly any of the Company, should become noisy, talkative, and impertinent, would they not incur the just Censure of others, who are disposed to give a due Attention to the Entertainment; and must they not necessarily conclude such Persons to be ignorant of the Rules of good Manners? For our Care not to offend others by our rude Behaviour is the very Foundation of Civility and good Breeding: But small and trifling is this Offence, when compared with a disrespectful, irreverent Behaviour in the Sanctuary of the Most High! As the Object of our Worship here is infinitely superior to any finite Being, so must the Crime of profaning

fanning his holy Name and Service be aggravated in Proportion!

And yet how ſtriking is the Contraſt between your Behaviour in the Sanctuary of the Living GOD, and your Deportment when aſſembled in the Court of Apollo! ——Here—if a *Sheridan* or a *Linley* are warbling forth their melliſluous Notes, or a *Fiſcher* is pouring Vollies of Semiquavers through every Outlet of his trilling Pipe, or ſwelling a Semibreve through the mellowing Reed;

Till faithful Eccho with her ſoft Rebound
Gently reflects, ſweetly repeats the Sound.

Mark what attentive Silence preſides throughout the Audience; not a Whiſper, not a Murmur to be heard![g]

When

[g] This brings to my Mind a faſhionable Abſurdity, commonly practiſed on theſe Occaſions, viz. the ſudden Advance from the profoundeſt Silence to the moſt tumultuous Noiſe; for as ſoon as the firſt Cane is ſet in Motion by thumping the Floor, the others catch the Alarum like a Train of Wildfire, and thoſe who are caneleſs join in the Clamour by clapping their Hands, or by bawling out Encore! or Bravo! till the Uproar is compleated with ſuch a Combination of jarring Sounds diſcordant, more congenial with the Sports of a Bear-Garden, than the Temple of the Muſes!

What an egregious Compliment do theſe pretended Votaries of *Apollo* pay to their Patron in Return for thoſe ſoft ſoothing Strains of Melody, with which they ſeem to have been ſo highly delighted! To prevent this Hurley Burley for the future, permit me to offer to your Conſideration a more rational Method of expreſſing your Approbation of the Performers Merit, viz.

Let there be a Preſident appointed for the Evening, (one who can diſtinguiſh a Minum from a Semiquaver) let

When we ſee ſuch profound Reverence paid to theſe airy Trifles, and ſuch Negligence, Inattention, and Diſreſpect to Things of the firſt Importance, can there be a Doubt remaining whether ye be not Lovers of Pleaſure more than Lovers of GOD? If ſo, remember the Words ſpoken of *Babylon*, *Iſa.* xlvii. 8. "Thou that art given to "Pleaſures, that dwelleſt careleſsly," when that great City was marked out by divine Providence for Deſtruction, which happened at a Time when the Inhabitants little expected it. And is there not a ſtriking Reſemblance betwixt the Manners of the *Babylonians*, and thoſe of the Inhabitants of this gay City? Can we expect to eſcape the divine Judgments when the Meaſure of our Iniquity is full? Of which Judgments the ALMIGHTY has a great Variety in Store.[h]

That

let him be provided with two Wreaths of Laurel, on one of which may be inſcribed the Word Bravo, on the other Braviſſimo, let one of theſe be given to the Performers according to their reſpective Merit, as they ſhall excel either in the comparative or ſuperlative Degree.

[h] The ALMIGHTY was pleaſed to ſend a gentle Warning to the Inhabitants of the Metropolis, in the Year 1750, by two ſeparate Shocks of an Earthquake,—I hope it produced ſome Reformation in their Manners, who, although they may have no Goodneſs to ſpare, are yet behind-hand with Bath, the younger Siſter in one Inſtance of Provocation, viz. that of opening her publick Rooms for the Reception of Company on the Lord's Day, this Evil being wiſely prevented at London by the Authority of her Magiſtrates. Go, ye Rulers in Bath, and do likewiſe.

"Felix quem faciunt aliena Pericula cautum."

That we may escape these Evils, let us remember the Words of holy Job, and practise them accordingly:

"The Fear of the LORD that is Wisdom,
"To depart from Evil is Understanding."

GENTLEMEN, PROPRIETORS.

In one Word, if what I have said be not of sufficient Weight to prevail on you (either out of Regard to yourselves, or your Posterity, or the Interest and Honour of our holy Religion) to suppress these illegal, ill-timed Assemblies on the Lord's Day: let there be some peculiar Mark set on them; hang a Label over your Doors, with this Inscription in Capital Letters, viz.

The DEVIL's DECOY;

or,

LUCIFER's COTERIE;

that the deluded Multitude who resort thither may know whose Kingdom they are promoting.

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L——S.